Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the subject application.

Status of the Claims

There are 24 claims pending in the subject application;

Claims 1, 11, 21 and 22 have been amended; and

Claims 2-10, 12-20, and 23-24 are original.

Listing of Claims:

1.   (currently amended) A method of determining the status of an answered telephone during the course of an outbound telephone call comprising:

A.   placing, with an automated calling system, a telephone call to a location having a telephone number at which that lists a target person is listed for whom a voice pattern template is not defined;

B.   upon said telephone call being answered, initiating a prerecorded greeting which asks for the target person;

C.   receiving a spoken response from an answering person;

D.   performing a speech recognition analysis on said spoken response to determine a status of said spoken response; and

E.   if said speech recognition analysis determines that said answering person is said target person, initiating a speech recognition application with said target person.

2.   (original) The method of claim 1 wherein, in step D, if said speech recognition analysis determines that said spoken response indicates that said answering person is not said target person, a next step comprises initiating a prerecorded query asking for said target person.

3. (original) The method of claim 2 wherein, upon said target person answering said telephone call, said method further comprises initiating a speech recognition application with said target person.

4. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein, in step D, if said speech recognition analysis determines that said spoken response indicates that said target person is not present at said location, a next step comprises initiating a prerecorded query asking to leave a message for said target person.

5. (original) The method of claim 4 further comprising a step of providing a prerecorded message to said answering person.

6. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein, in step D, if said speech recognition analysis determines that said spoken response is a hold request, a next step comprises entering a wait state to wait for said target person to provide a spoken response to said telephone call.

7. (original) The method of claim 6 wherein, upon said target person providing a spoken response to said telephone call, said method further comprises initiating a speech recognition application with said target person.

8. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein, in step D, if said speech recognition analysis determines that said spoken response is a request for the identity of the entity responsible for the calling system, the method further comprises initiating a prerecorded response indicating the identity of the calling party, repeating said prerecorded greeting which asks for the target person, and repeating step C through step E.

9. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein, in step D, if said speech recognition analysis determines that said spoken response indicates that said telephone number is not the correct number for the target person, the method further comprises initiating a prerecorded apology message and terminating said telephone call.

10.   (original) The method of claim 1 wherein, in step D, if said speech recognition analysis cannot determine a status of said spoken response, said method further comprises repeating said prerecorded greeting which asks for the target person, and repeating step C through step E.

11.   (currently amended) A system for determining the status of an answered telephone during the course of an outbound telephone call comprising:

an automated telephone calling device for placing a telephone call to a location having a telephone number at which that lists a target person is listed for whom a voice pattern template is not defined; and

a speech recognition device which, upon said telephone call being answered, initiates a prerecorded greeting which asks for the target person, receives a spoken response from an answering person and performs a speech recognition analysis on said spoken response to determine a status of said spoken response;

wherein, if said speech recognition device determines that said answering person is said target person, said speech recognition device initiates a speech recognition application with said target person.

12.   (original) The system of claim 11 wherein, if said speech recognition device determines that said spoken response indicates that said answering person is not said target person, said speech recognition system instructs said automated telephone calling device to initiate a prerecorded query asking for said target person.

13.   (original) The system of claim 12 wherein, upon said target person answering said telephone call, said speech recognition system initiates a speech recognition application with said target person.

14.   (original) The system of claim 11 wherein, if said speech recognition device determines that said spoken response indicates that said target person is not present at said location, said speech recognition system instructs said automated telephone calling device to initiate a prerecorded query asking to leave a message for said target person.

15.   (original) The system of claim 14 wherein said automated telephone calling device provides a prerecorded message to said answering person.

16.   (original) The system of claim 11 wherein, if said speech recognition device determines that said spoken response is a hold request, said speech recognition enters a wait state to wait for said target person to provide a spoken response to said telephone call.

17.   (original) The system of claim 16 wherein, when said speech recognition device determines that said target person has provided a spoken response to said telephone call, said speech recognition device initiates a speech recognition application with said target person.

18.   (original) The system of claim 11 wherein, if said speech recognition device determines that said spoken response is a request for the identity of the entity responsible for the automated calling device, the speech recognition system instructs said automated telephone calling device to initiate a prerecorded response indicating the identity of the entity and to repeat said prerecorded greeting which asks for the target person;

        wherein, upon receiving a spoken response from the answering person, said speech recognition device performs a speech recognition analysis on said spoken response to determine the status of said spoken response.

19.   (original) The method of claim 11 wherein, if said speech recognition device determines that said spoken response indicates that said telephone number is not the correct number for the target person, said speech recognition system instructs said automated telephone calling device to initiate a prerecorded apology message and to terminate said telephone call.

20.   (original) The method of claim 11 wherein, if said speech recognition device cannot determine a status of said spoken response, said speech recognition system instructs said automated telephone calling device to repeat said prerecorded greeting which asks for the target person;

wherein, upon receiving a spoken response from the answering person, said speech recognition device performs a speech recognition analysis on said spoken response to determine the status of said spoken response.

21.   (currently amended) A method for determining the status of an answered telephone during the course of an outbound telephone call comprising:

A.   placing, with an automated calling system, a telephone call to a location having a telephone number ~~at which~~ that lists a target person ~~is listed~~ for whom a voice pattern template is not defined;

B.   upon said telephone call being answered, initiating a prerecorded greeting which asks for the target person;

C.   receiving a spoken response from an answering person;

D.   performing a speech recognition analysis on said spoken response to determine a status of said spoken response; and

E.   providing at least one of the following responses based on said speech recognition analysis:

a.   if said speech recognition analysis determines that said answering person is said target person, initiating a speech recognition application with said target person;

b.   if said speech recognition analysis determines that said spoken response indicates that said answering person is not said target person, initiating a prerecorded query asking for said target person, wherein, upon said target person answering said telephone call, said method further comprises initiating a speech recognition application with said target person;

c.   if said speech recognition analysis determines that said spoken response indicates that said target person is not present at said location, initiating a prerecorded query asking to leave a message for said target person;

d.   if said speech recognition analysis determines that said spoken response is a hold request, entering a wait state to wait for said target person to provide a

spoken response to said telephone call, wherein, upon said target person providing a spoken response to said telephone call, said method further comprises initiating a speech recognition application with said target person;

e.   if said speech recognition analysis determines that said spoken response is a request for the identity of the entity responsible for the calling system, initiating a prerecorded response indicating the identity of the calling party, repeating said prerecorded greeting which asks for the target person, and repeating step C through step E;

f.   if said speech recognition analysis determines that said spoken response indicates that said telephone number is not the correct number for the target person, initiating a prerecorded apology message and terminating said telephone call; and

g.   if said speech recognition analysis cannot determine a status of said spoken response, repeating said prerecorded greeting which asks for the target person, and repeating step C through step E.

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cont

22.   (currently amended) A method of detecting an answering machine comprising:

A.   placing, with an automated calling system, a telephone call to a location having a telephone number ~~at which~~ that lists a target person ~~is listed~~ <u>for whom a voice pattern template is not defined</u>;

B.   upon said telephone call being answered, waiting for a predetermined time period for a spoken response;

C.   upon receiving said spoken response, playing a prerecorded greeting prompt which asks for said target person;

D.   while playing said prerecorded greeting prompt, attempting to detect a further spoken response in excess of a predetermined time parameter;

E.   in the absence of detecting said further spoken response during the playing of said prerecorded greeting prompt, initiating a query application;

F.   upon detecting said further spoken response during the playing of said prerecorded greeting prompt, terminating the playing of said prerecorded prompt; and

G.   indicating that an answering machine has been detected.

23.   (original) The method of claim 22 further comprising the step of attempting to detect a beep tone during the playing of said prerecorded greeting prompt and, upon the detection of a beep tone, interrupting the prerecorded greeting prompt and playing a prerecorded answering machine message prompt.

24.   (original) The method of claim 23 further comprising attempting to detect a beep tone during the playing of said prerecorded answering machine message prompt and, upon the detection of a beep tone, interrupting said prerecorded answering machine message prompt and replaying said prerecorded prompt.